UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA JS-6

CIVIL MINUTES—GENERAL

Case No. CV17-04921-MWF (PLAx) **Date: May 14, 2018**
Title: Russell Rope -*v*- Facebook, Inc., et al.

Present: The Honorable MICHAEL W. FITZGERALD, U.S. District Judge

Deputy Clerk:	Court Reporter:
Rita Sanchez	Not Reported
Attorneys Present for Plaintiff:	**Attorneys Present for Defendant:**
None Present	None Present

Proceedings (In Chambers): ORDER GRANTING MOTIONS TO DISMISS [222] [224]; PLAINTIFF'S VARIOUS REQUESTS RE: MOTIONS [237] [242] [243] [244] [245]

Before the Court are two motions to dismiss Pro Se Plaintiff Russell Rope's First Amended Complaint ("FAC"), which was filed on February 19, 2018. (Docket No. 136). Defendant JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. ("JPMorgan"), filed a Motion to Dismiss (the "JPMorgan Motion") on March 16, 2018. (Docket No. 222). Plaintiff filed an Opposition on April 23, 2018 (Docket No. 238), to which JPMorgan replied on April 30, 2018. (Docket No. 240).

On March 19, 2018, Defendants Apple Inc., Facebook, Inc., Alphabet, Inc., and Twitter, Inc. (together, "Tech Defendants") also filed a Motion to Dismiss (the "Tech Motion"). (Docket No. 224). Plaintiff filed an Opposition on April 23, 2018 (Docket No. 239), and the Tech Defendants filed a Reply on April 30, 2018. (Docket No. 241).

Plaintiff also sought leave to file sur-replies to JPMorgan's and the Tech Defendants' Replies. (Docket Nos. 242, 243, 244, 245). Those requests are **DENIED**. Plaintiff already filed over-sized Oppositions of at least 50 pages each to each Motion, and the proposed sur-replies are not necessary for the Court's determination of the Motions.

In connection with his Oppositions, Plaintiff also requested that the Court consider all of the exhibits filed in connection with his initial Complaint as

incorporated into the FAC. (Docket No. 237). The Court considers the exhibits as necessary to determine the Motions; the request is **GRANTED**.

Pursuant to Rule 78 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Local Rule 7-15, the Court determined that the Motions were appropriate for submission on the papers, and vacated the hearing set for May 14, 2018. (Docket No. 246). The Court has read and considered the papers filed on the Motions, and for the reasons set forth below, the JPMorgan Motion and the Tech Motion are both **GRANTED *without leave to amend***. Plaintiff's FAC suffers from the same defects as his initial Complaint.

I. DISCUSSION

First, like the initial Complaint, the FAC fails to meet the requirements of Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The initial Complaint was 100 pages long (without the 66 exhibits), and contained 310 paragraphs of "rambling, unrelated allegations against the named Defendants as well as his doctors, strangers on the street, law enforcement officers, doormen at night clubs, his brothers, his landlords, and myriad other companies and individuals." (Order re Motions to Dismiss at 7 (Docket No. 114)). In the Court's prior Order granting Defendants' Motions to Dismiss the Complaint, the Court afforded Plaintiff ***one*** opportunity to "remove excessive redundancy, allegations irrelevant to the claims for relief, and conclusory or excessively argumentative allegations" such that the amended Complaint conformed to the Rule 8. (*Id.*).

Plaintiff has failed to comply with the Court's directives in this regard. The FAC is now 126 pages (without exhibits) and contains 365 paragraphs in which Plaintiff doubles down on the conclusory, unrelated allegations asserted in the initial Complaint. The allegations in the FAC do no more to put Defendants on notice of the nature of the claims against them than did the allegations in the initial Complaint. Indeed, Plaintiff's failure to comply – or even attempt to comply – with the Court's order is itself reason to dismiss the FAC. *See Ferdik v. Bonzelet*, 963 F.2d 1258, 1260

(9th Cir. 1992) (stating that district court may dismiss action for failure to comply with any order of the court).

Again, it is not the Court's responsibility to "expend time and effort searching through large masses of conclusory, argumentative, evidentiary and other extraneous allegations in order to discover whether the essentials of claims asserted can be found in such a mélange." *Jacobson v. Schwartzenegger*, 226 F.R.D. 395, 397 (C.D. Cal. 2005) (citation omitted) (dismissing 200-page complaint for failure to comply with Rule 8); *Hatch v. Reliance Ins. Co.*, 758 F.2d 409, 415 (9th Cir. 1985) (affirming district court's dismissal of complaints that "exceeded 70 pages in length, were confusing and conclusory, and not in compliance with Rule 8"); *McHenry v. Renne*, 84 F.3d 1172, 1178 (9th Cir. 1996) (affirming dismissal of complaint that was "argumentative, prolix, replete with redundancy, and largely irrelevant").

Second, as with the initial Complaint, it appears that at least some, if not all, of Plaintiff's claims are barred by the doctrine of res judicata, although the confusing nature of the FAC makes it impossible for the Court to determine conclusively that the claims are barred. In the FAC, Plaintiff himself refers to and incorporates by reference his multiple prior actions in federal and state court against Defendants. (*See, e.g.*, FAC ¶¶ 41, 85, 321). Regardless of how Plaintiff now styles his claims for relief, even he acknowledges that they are based on the same facts and issues – for example, JPMorgan's allegedly wrongful closing of Plaintiff's bank account, theft of his money, and attempts to thwart his job searches. The "true inquiry" for res judicata purposes is whether the "claims arose from the same transactional nucleus of facts." *United States v. Liquidators of European Fed. Credit Bank*, 630 F.3d 1139, 1151 (9th Cir. 2011); *Turtle Island Restoration Network v. U.S. Dep't of State*, 673 F.3d 914, 918 (9th Cir. 2012) (holding that where claims arise out of "same transactional nucleus of facts" res judicata may apply even if actions present different legal claims).

In the Court's prior Order dismissing the Complaint, the Court ordered Plaintiff to amend his Complaint to ensure that it raised "only claims that have not already been dismissed on the merits" in Plaintiff's prior actions against Defendants. (Order re Motions to Dismiss at 10). Although the Court does not conclusively determine

which claims are barred by res judicata – nor does it need to do so, in light of its determination that the FAC fails under Rule 8 – it is apparent that Plaintiff has not complied with the Court's instructions with respect to amending his Complaint.

Third, Defendants correctly argue that no one of Plaintiff's 22 claims is properly pled. Although the Court need not reach this issue in light of its conclusion under Rule 8, it is apparent that Plaintiff's claims fail under Rule 12(b)(6) as well. For example, 11 of Plaintiff's claims are brought pursuant to the California Penal Code or federal criminal statutes that do not create private rights of action. (*See* JPMorgan Mot. at 12-15; Tech Mot. at 16-20). In his Opposition to the JPMorgan Motion, Plaintiff admits he is not seeking liability pursuant to these claims, and instead pleads them as "prerequisite[s]" for the alleged RICO conspiracy. (Opp. at 25).

In another example, Plaintiff's various fraud claims (fraud, computer fraud, wire fraud, and mail fraud) all fail to meet the heightened pleading standards of Rule 9(b). "Rule 9(b) demands that, when averments of fraud are made, the circumstances constituting the alleged fraud be specific enough to give defendants notice of the particular misconduct so that they can defend against the charge[.]" *Vess v. Ciba-Geigy Corp. USA*, 317 F.3d 1097, 1106 (9th Cir. 2003) (internal citations omitted). Under Rule 9(b), fraud allegations must include the "time, place, and specific content of the false representations as well as the identities of the parties to the misrepresentations." *Swartz v. KPMG LLP*, 476 F.3d 756, 764 (9th Cir. 2007) (citing *Edwards v. Marin Park, Inc.*, 356 F.3d 1058, 1066 (9th Cir. 2004)). In his Opposition to the Tech Motion, Plaintiff points to the timeline in Exhibit 39 and the "broad factual allegations stated throughout the body of the complaint" as satisfying this heightened standard. (Opp. at 27). But Exhibit 39 is a long list of vague, cryptic line items such as "Loan Fraud" and "Continuous Housing Fraud++ @ Hollywood". Neither Exhibit 39 nor the allegations in the FAC state the necessary time, place, specific content, or specific parties involved in any misrepresentations.

In response to the Court's grant of leave to amend the initial Complaint, Plaintiff ignored the Court's directives regarding Rule 8 and res judicata. It is apparent that permitting Plaintiff another opportunity to amend would be futile. *See,*

e.g., *Plumeau v. School Dist. No. 40 County of Yamhill*, 130 F.3d 432, 439 (9th Cir. 1997) (affirming district court's denial of leave to amend where "any such amendment would have been futile"); *Hawkins v. Thomas*, No. EDCV 09-1862 JST (SS), 2012 WL 1944828, at *1-2 (C.D. Cal. May 29, 2012) (dismissing pro se plaintiff's complaint with prejudice where "the dismissed claims could not be cured by any amendment"). Plaintiff acknowledges as much in his Opposition to the Tech Motion, stating, "Further amendment of the FAC at this point would mostly be a waste of time." (Opp. at 53).

II. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the Motions are **GRANTED *without leave to amend***.

This Order shall constitute notice of entry of judgment pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 58. Pursuant to Local Rule 58-6, the Court **ORDERS** the Clerk to treat this Order, and its entry on the docket, as an entry of judgment.

IT IS SO ORDERED.